

EXHIBIT A

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CENTRAL FAX CENTER

1. (Currently amended) A method comprising:
- receiving orders from customers, said orders being for goods from a plurality of vendors, said orders being communicated to each of said vendors;
- collecting said goods from said plurality of vendors at a central location;
- providing said goods in reusable containers, said reusable containers having a radio frequency identification device and a memory attached thereto;
- establishing a relationship between a radio frequency identification device and a memory;
- informing said customers when said goods will be available for pickup;
- making said goods available for pickup by said customers, wherein said goods are in said reusable containers;
- collecting said reusable containers from said customers; and
- identifying which customers have returned their reusable containers by electronically querying the radio frequency identification devices attached to the reusable containers collected from said customers.
2. (Previously presented) Method of claim 1 wherein said establishing of said relationship comprises storing in said memory a database including data associated with said radio frequency identification device.
3. (Previously presented) Method of claim 1 wherein said establishing of said relationship comprises storing in said memory an identification indicia indicative of said radio frequency identification device.

4. (Original) Method of claim 1 wherein said establishing of said relationship comprises storing in said memory an identification of the customer to whom said container is provided.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously presented) Method of claim 1 wherein said customers return said reusable containers to a central collection point, said method further comprising querying the radio frequency identification devices within said containers when said customers return said containers to said collection point.

7. (Previously presented) Method of claim 1 further comprising crediting accounts of those customers who return their reusable containers, said crediting being accomplished by a computer that receives the data scanned in from said radio frequency identification devices.

8-9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently amended) A method comprising:
receiving orders from customers, said orders being for goods from a plurality of vendors, said orders being communicated to each of said vendors;
collecting said goods from said plurality of vendors at a central location;
providing said goods in reusable containers, said reusable containers having a radio frequency identification device attached thereto and a memory;
informing said customers when said goods will be available for pickup;

establishing a relationship between a radio frequency identification device and a memory;

making said goods available for pickup by said customers, wherein said goods are in said reusable containers;

collecting said reusable containers ~~from said customers~~; and

identifying which containers have been collected by electronically querying the radio frequency identification devices attached to the reusable containers ~~collected from said customers~~.

11-12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently amended) A method comprising:

receiving orders from customers, said orders being for goods from a plurality of vendors, said orders being communicated to each of said vendors;

collecting said goods from said plurality of vendors at a central location;

providing said goods in reusable containers, said reusable containers having a radio frequency identification device and a memory an indicia attached thereto;

establishing a relationship between said indicia a radio frequency identification device and a memory;

informing said customers when said goods will be available for pickup;

making said goods available for pickup by said customers, wherein said goods are in said reusable containers;

collecting said reusable containers from said customers; and

identifying which customers have returned their reusable containers by electronically querying the radio frequency identification devices reading the indicia attached to the reusable containers collected from said customers.

14. (Original) Method of claim 13 wherein said indicia comprise machine readable indicia, said method further comprising scanning said machine readable indicia prior to providing said goods in said containers to said customers, and entering into said memory information indicating the containers and the customers to whom said containers are being provided.

15. (Original) Method of claim 14 wherein said indicia comprises a bar code or a magnetic strip.

16. (Original) Method of claim 14 further comprising collecting said containers from said customers and scanning said indicia after collecting said containers from said customers.

17. (Original) Method of claim 13 wherein said indicia are machine-readable indicia, said reading of said indicia comprising scanning said indicia electronically.

18. (Currently amended) [[m]]Method of claim 1 further comprising: collecting information on the purchasing habits of said customers and storing said information in a memory device; and

offering a reduction of shipping cost in exchange for allowing targeted advertisement to be added to the reusable containers in response to said information in said memory device.

19. (Previously presented) Method of claim 1 wherein said reusable containers contain one or more consumer products and are provided to the consumers of said consumer products in said containers.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Previously presented) Method of claim 10 wherein said reusable containers contain one or more consumer products and are provided to the consumers of said consumer products in said containers.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Previously presented) Method of claim 13 wherein said reusable containers contain one or more consumer products and are provided to the consumers of said consumer products in said containers.

24. (Previously presented) Method of claim 18 wherein said reusable containers contain one or more consumer products and are provided to the consumers of said consumer products in said containers.

25. (Previously presented) Method of claim 1 wherein said radio frequency identification device is provided in a compartment within said container.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously presented) Method of claim 10 wherein said radio frequency identification device is provided in a compartment within said container.

28. (Canceled)

29. (Currently amended) A method comprising:
receiving orders from customers, said orders being for goods from a plurality of vendors, said orders being communicated to each of said vendors;
collecting said goods from said plurality of vendors at a central location;
providing said goods in reusable containers, said reusable containers being equipped with having a radio frequency identification device and a memory;
informing said customers when said goods will be available for pickup;
making said goods available for pickup by said customers, wherein said goods are in said reusable containers;
collecting said reusable containers from said customers; and
identifying which customers have returned their reusable containers by electronically querying the radio frequency identification devices with which the reusable containers collected from said customers are equipped.

30. (Previously presented) Method of claim 29 further comprising logging data in a memory indicative of the return of said reusable containers in response to said electronically querying.

31. (Canceled)

32. (Currently amended) A method comprising:
receiving orders from customers, said orders being for goods from a plurality of vendors, said orders being communicated to each of said vendors;
collecting said goods from said plurality of vendors at a central location;
providing said goods in reusable containers, said reusable containers equipped with having a radio frequency identification device and a memory;
shipping said goods in said containers to a distribution point;
informing said customers when said goods will be available for pickup;
making said goods available for pickup by said customers, wherein said goods are in said reusable containers;
collecting said reusable containers after said shipping and providing; and
identifying which containers have been collected by electronically querying the radio frequency identification devices with which attached to the reusable containers are equipped.

33. (Previously presented) Method of claim 32 further comprising logging data in a memory indicative of the return of said reusable containers in response to said electronically querying.

34. (Canceled)

35. (Previously presented) Method of claim 29 or 32 wherein the goods provided in said reusable containers are one or more packaged items.

36. (Currently amended) Method of claim 29 or 32 wherein the reusable containers [[comprise]] are capable of containing one or more packaged items.

37-41. (Canceled)

42. (Previously presented) Method of claim 29 or 32 wherein said containers are capable of containing different types of goods.

43. (Canceled)

44. (Previously presented) Method of claim 29 or 32 wherein said containers are capable of storing solid goods.

45. (Previously presented) Method of claim 29 or 32 wherein said containers store solid goods.

46. (Canceled)

47. (Previously presented) Method of claim 29 further comprising:

electronically ordering from a plurality of different companies some of said goods, said ordering of said goods being accomplished by a customer; shipping said goods to a distribution point for pick-up by said customer in response to said ordering.

48. (Previously presented) Method of claim 47 wherein said goods from said plurality of different companies ordered by said customer are provided in one of said reusable containers, said customer picking up said goods at said distribution point.

49. (Canceled)